

Community Church Huddersfield
Roots of Restoration Notes

Session 8 – Authority, Shepherding and Discipleship

1. From creation we see God's purpose was for the earth to be both filled and ruled.

- a. The earth was without form (un-ruled) and void (empty) – see Gen.1:2
- b. In his creation God both filled and also brought order, rule and government (see Gen.1)
 - i. Rule is shown through separation, 'each according to their kind', signs and season and through the governing lights
- c. God commissioned humanity to both fill the earth and to rule it (see Gen.1:26, 28; 2: Ps.8:6)
 - i. *All creation was to enjoy God's rule by responding to Adam who represented that rule through the authority God gave him. (Mansell, Restoration, 5-6/84, p.6)*
- d. The result of the fall was that the filling continued but not the rule
 - i. It was filled with sin, disorder, disobedience, suffering etc. instead of that which reflected the image of God, because there was a disruption in rule
 - ii. For example, godly and loving headship in the home was replaced with strife (See Gen.3:16 NLT)
- e. Rule and headship are not a result of the fall but are integral to the creation order
 - i. *The purpose of authority is not arbitrary restriction but meaningful direction. Authority, order and rule are fundamental laws of creation and of God's government. (Mansell, Restoration, 5-6/84, p.5)*
- f. The devil is the source of disorder and evil (James 3:16)

2. The ideas of rule and filling/fullness belong together

- a. The filling of the earth is not just about natural growth and reproduction but points to a spiritual principle - that which is alive increasing, fruitful and coming to fullness.
 - i. The natural illustrates the spiritual
- b. The word **fullness** is very important and indicates something coming to maturity, completeness and perfection.(Eph.1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Col.1:19; 2:9)

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

(Eph.1:22-23)

- c. God's purpose is for the church to come to fullness - to the full stature of Christ (Eph.4:13)
- d. This cannot happen without rule
 - i. The rule or lordship of Christ – see above and Eph.1:10
 - ii. The application of the spiritual principle of rule both personally and relationally
- e. It is possible to get a glimpse of the dislocation between filling and ruling in different personality types, ways of working and in different relational contexts.
 - i. Do you incline to the creative, filling-type or the ordering, ruling-type?

3. Fullness is not just about increase but about Integration – rule brings growth with coherence, or unity

- a. In Christ all things hold together (Col.1:18)
 - i. Personality, relationships, society, natural environment
- b. Integration and unity requires headship

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

(Ephesians 1:9-10)

- c. Adam failed as head of humanity. Jesus is the new federal head of humanity (Rom.5:15-19; 1 Cor.15:45, 47 Heb.2:8-10)
- d. Christ's headship is essential for the body to come to fullness
 - i. *We must learn how to walk in God's order as well as in his holiness or else we'll find we still can't build relationships, families and churches....* (Mansell, *Restoration*, 5-6/84, p.7)
 - ii. *Without the life of the head there can be no body. Without the authority of the head there can be no unity.* (Nee, *Spiritual Authority*, p.24)
- e. Does this just mean people becoming Christians and rightly relating to God's direct authority in Christ, or does it also include being rightly related to delegated authority?

4. The importance of spiritual authority

The controversy of the universe is centred on who shall have the authority, and our conflict with Satan is the direct result of our attributing authority to God. To maintain God's authority we must be subject to it with all our hearts. It is absolutely necessary for us to meet God's authority and to possess a basic knowledge of what it is.ⁱ

- a. Authority is the right to rule – based on God's call and God's anointing
- b. We have seen how essential it is for the church to come to fullness and so for the restoration of all things.
 - i. *The earth was ruined through the usurping of God's authority by Satan and Adam. It will be restored by a return to submission and obedience* (Mansell, *Restoration*, 5-6/84, p.6)
- c. It is perhaps especially important in an age which is very cynical and suspicious of authority
 - i. *If I understand the modern religious situation at all, this whole question of authority is one of the most important problems confronting us* (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authority*)
- d. The application of spiritual authority in our lives is not just about rightly relating to delegated authorities but about ruling our own spirits (Proverbs 16:32)
- e. It does include being rightly related to delegated authorities and, where required, exercising authority in a godly way.
 - i. *The church suffers from many who do not know how to obey, but she is likewise damaged through some who have not learned how to be in authority.* (Nee, *Spiritual Authority*, p.25)

5. The importance of delegated authority

- a. The concept of leaders of God's people carrying delegated authority is clear in the Old Testament.

Moses said to the LORD, ¹⁶“May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community ¹⁷to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the LORD'S people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

(Numbers 27:15-17)

- b. There is also the implication that even rulers of other nations were instituted by God (see Daniel 4:32)
- c. We see clear examples of delegated authorities in the New Testament
 - i. Child to parents (Eph.6:1-2)
 - ii. Wife to husband (Eph.5:24)
 - iii. Church to elders (Heb.13:17)
 - iv. Workers to bosses (1 Pet.2:18/Col.3:22)
 - v. Citizens to rulers (Rom.13:1-7/ 1 Peter 2:13-14)
- d. These last two references show how important delegated authority is

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

(Romans 13:1-2)

- e. There seems to have been an understanding of delegated authority among the angelic realm (Jude 6)
 - i. Angels understand the importance of authority (1 Cor.11:10)
 - ii. Angels would not directly abuse even fallen angelic authorities (Jude 8-9)
 - iii. Just as David would not abuse the fallen human authority in the person of Saul (1 Sam.24:4-6; 26:9, 11; 2 Sam.1:14)
 - It is possible to be critical, resistant and even in some cases disobedient to people in authority while still honouring the position and principle of authority
 - We should be very careful whenever speaking against anyone in authority (Numbers 12:8)
- f. A new appreciation of delegated authority is essential to the advance of God's purpose
 - i. *Of all the radical changes in the New Apostolic Reformation, I regard one of them as the most radical of all. It is so important that I have chosen these words very carefully: the amount of spiritual authority delegated by the Holy Spirit to individuals*ⁱⁱ
- g. How people respond to delegated authority is a key to spiritual progress
 - i. See how the apostle Paul responded both to direct and delegated authority in Acts 9:5-6
 - ii. *It does not require humility to be obedient to God's direct authority, but it does demand humbleness and brokenness to be subject to delegated authority.*

(Nee, *Spiritual Authority*, p.72)

6. We start getting this issue right not just by identifying delegated authorities but by cultivating the spirit of submission and obedience

- a. God values obedience as an expression of faith above all things
 - i. To obey is better than sacrifice
 - ii. The value of the cross lies in the obedience of the man Jesus (Phil.2:8)
 - iii. Obedience is key to our salvation though it is the obedience of faith (Heb.5:8-9; Acts 5:32; 1 Pet.1:22)

- b. Jesus is equal with God and yet subordinate to God within the Trinity (see John 5:36; 4:34; 6:38; 8:28; 5:26-27; 14:28)
- c. He also 'learned obedience' as a man (Hebrews 5:7-9)
- d. Amazingly, the one who is equal with God and the radiance of God's glory is our primary example of submission obedience

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

(Phil.2:5-8)

- e. Independence and lack of submission is a recipe for disaster

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

(Judges 21:25)

7. One of God's delegated authorities are the elders of the local church who are likened to shepherds (pastors) – a fitting image of rule

- a. Clearly elders are called to rule in the church and we are called to be rightly related to our church leaders

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

(Heb.13:17; see also 1 Tim.3:4-6)

- b. Shepherding and ruling go together in the Bible (Matt.2:6; John 10:3; Acst 20:28; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:2; Rev.7:17)
 - i. This is not to frighten us about our shepherds but to help us to understand the true nature and purpose of rule and authority!
- c. The provision of shepherds is an act of compassion that God makes because he sees the pain caused by people who are not shepherded .

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

(Matt.9:35-36)

- i. Jesus prepared his disciples not only to preach and to heal but to shepherd (Matt.9:35-10:4; John 21:15-17)
- d. Jesus is our chief shepherd but he does delegate authority to under-shepherds
- e. He is the example of how to be a true shepherd
- f. Another way to look at true biblical and spiritual rule is to see in terms of the parenting or fathering of the family (1 Tim.3:4-5)
 - i. *Authority is rooted in fatherhood ..the authority that rules is the one that loves and protects.* (Mansell, *Restoration* 5-6/84, p.7)
- g. Those who exercise authority must themselves be under authority – both direct and delegated
 - i. *Fitness to carry authority comes from true submission to all God says, complete obedience and a humble heart that only longs to see God's will done in everything.* (Mansell, *Restoration*, 5-6/84, p.7)
 - ii. Those who submit to authority are able to exercise authority
 - iii. The one exercising authority must honour the one who gave it to him – God and the delegated authority
- h. No-one can truly rule unless they are appointed by God (2 Cor.10:13; Acts 20:28)
- i. One also has to be trained to be faithful in service (Luke 19:17) and in overcoming (Rev.2:26)

8. God has severe warnings for bad shepherds who abuse their authority

- a. See ***Ezekiel 34***
 - i. Only concerned with themselves
 - Feed only themselves (Jude 1:12)
 - ii. Don't care for God's flock
 - Failing to strengthen, support or search for
 - iii. Harsh and brutal
 - iv. Failed to protect them
 - v. Note that they were judged harshly
 - vi. Note also that God also judged the strong sheep who hurt the weaker sheep
- b. But the abuse of authority should lead not to dis-use but to right use.
 - i. *Heaviness is avoided by love and involvement, not by abdication. True authority can be entreated.* (Mansell, *Restoration* 5-6/84, p.7)
- c. It is the abuse of shepherding-ruling that we must root out and not the principle itself

9. The Benefits of Good Shepherding

a. *Ps. 23*

- i. Provision
- ii. Rest, Refreshing and Restoration
- iii. Protection and Guidance
- iv. Victory and Abundance

b. See *Isaiah 32:1ff* for the benefits of direct and delegated authority:

- i. Protection – shelter and refuge
- ii. Refreshing and security – stream and the shadow
- iii. Revelation and understanding
- iv. Wisdom, righteousness and provision

c. See *Num 27:16-17* and *John 10:1-18*

- i. Leadership
- ii. Personal care (John 10:2-3)
- iii. Lead to good pasture – well fed with gospel truth
- iv. Sets the pace for the flock
- v. Sacrifices himself for the flock

d. Protects

- i. The parent who warns and instructs their child not to touch the fore is not throwing his weight around

e. Build us up and develops us (2 Cor.10:8)

f. Supports

g. Corrects

h. C-ordinates

- i. *A vital part of our training is learning to work in contented relationship with those who are directing the strategy* (Mansell, p.8)

10. The Practice of Shepherding

a. *Expect from your shepherd:*

- i. To set an example and to be able teach you
- ii. To be a man of good character
- iii. To bring instruction, advice, counsel, correction, command
- iv. Sacrifice and hard work (John 10:11)
- v. Not to rule by a rigid system but by wise judgements of each person and each situation guided by the principles of Scripture
- vi. To be accountable – he is a steward (Tit.1:7; Heb.13:17)

b. *Practice yourselves:*

- i. Willingness to receive instruction and correction as well as encouragement and help
- ii. Be teachable
- iii. Have faith in those over you
- iv. Honour by not criticising or gossiping
- v. Honour by being part of the corporate and not just doing your own thing

- vi. Don't treat those in authority as a separate breed!
- vii. Be faithful in small things
- viii. Recognise that authority is to be honoured because it is ordained by God not because the man is always right

11. The attitude of submission and obedience will also help us be prepared to be disciplined by others

- a. *Discipleship is learning in the context of a yoke (Tomlinson, Restoration, 7-8/80)*
- b. It is about 'teaching them to obey' (Matt.28:18-20)
- c. One by one admonishing – not just teaching (see Acts 20:31 in Amp)
 - i. *The soul that were awakened under his [Wesley's] ministry, he joined in class and thus preserved the fruit of his labours. This I neglected and my people are a rope of sand (George Whitefield).*
- d. Discipleship is essential for lasting church growth and the continuation of the purpose of God through the generations

ⁱ Watchman Nee, *Spiritual Authority*, (CFP, 1972),p.12

ⁱⁱ Peter Wagner, *Apostles ad Prophets*, (Regal, 2000), p.25. This is an interesting observation, but this is not a book that I could recommend for an understanding of the ministry of the apostle

Trevor Lloyd
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